

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 /068 W

-----058939 030933Z /10

O P 030854Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

USDEL SECRETARY AIRCRAFT IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4248

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 4940

BEIRUT FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MAAR, SY, IS, XF

SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA ON THE EVE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT

SUMMARY: THE MEDIA IN SYRIA HIGHLIGHT ASSAD'S ACTIVITY ON THE EVE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT: A MEETING WITH YASIR ARAFAT. THE MEDIA ALSO REPORT THE SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN CAIRO. TODAY'S SOLE EDITORIAL IS DEVOTED TO THE VISIT WHICH OUTLINES SYRIA'S MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS: A) ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, B) PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, C) PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN ANY NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK AND, D) ENDING THE STATE OF WAR. IT ADDS THAT SYRIA WILL NOT GIVE UP ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO DETERMINE ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS. OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS THE PRESS HAS EDUCATED THE PEOPLE NOT TO EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AND HAS MADE THE POINT THAT SYRIA DOES NOT NEED GENEVA RIGHT NOW. END SUMMARY

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1. PRESIDENT HAFEZ AL-ASSAD AND FONMIN KHADDAM SPENT THE EVE, AUGUST 2, OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT IN A MEETING WITH PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN YASIR ARAFAT AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. AL-BAATH AND AL-THAWRA BANNER HEADLINES SAYS: "ASSAD REVIEWS CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA WITH THE PLO: AFFIRMATION OF STEPPED-UP ARAB VIGILANCE TO CONFRONT HOSTILE DESIGNS; STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE

A JUST PEACE CONTINUES. " THERE IS NO MENTION OF AFP REPORTS FROM BEIRUT THAT A SYRIAN-PLO AGREEMENT WAS STRUCK THREE WEEKS AGO PROMISING INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA IN RETURN FOR IMPLEMENTING A SYRIAN-PLO AGREEMENT ON LEBANON. THE MEDIA CONFINES ITS COVERAGE OF THE DETAILS OF LAST NIGHT'S MEETING TO NOTING THAT THE STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE LEADING TO FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND GUARANTEEING THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

2. PRESS REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY'S TALKS IN CAIRO ARE DRAWN FROM NEWS AGENCY REPORTS AND SAY: "PRESIDENT SADAT ANNOUNCED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH SECRETARY VANCE THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED WITH THE SECRETARY ON ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SECRETARY TO DEAL WITH THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE SO THAT THE CONFERENCE WILL BE EFFECTIVE AND FRUITFUL IN REACHING A SETTLEMENT FOR THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM." THE SECRETARY IS QUOTED AS SAYING: "I VERY MUCH WELCOME THE ADMIRABLE SUGGESTION PROPOSED BY PRESIDENT SADAT IN CALLING FOR THE PARTIES TO MEET IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A WORKING GROUP. I WILL DISCUSS WITH THE OTHER PARTIES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SUGGESTION AND I WILL TRY TO MEET WITH THIS WORKING GROUP IN THE US IN THE MIDDLE OF SEPTEMBER."

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3. A TISHRIN EDITORIAL SUMS UP THE SYRIAN POSITION ON THE EVE OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. IT SAYS THAT THE SUCCESS OF SECRETARY'S VISIT WILL DEPEND ON THE PROPOSALS THE SECRETARY IS BRINGING WITH HIM AND ON WHETHER OR NOT THESE PROPOSALS MEET THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

A) ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967.

B) ENABLING THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO EXERCISE THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS.

C) PARTICIPATION BY THE PALESTINIANS IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE OR IN ANY OTHER FRAMEWORK FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

D) ENDING THE STATE OF WAR.

THE EDITORIAL ADDS THAT ANY ATTEMPT TO LINK THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS WITH CONCESSIONS IN MATTERS WHICH CONSTITUTE THE ESSENCE OF SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE ARE DOOMED IN ADVANCE TO FAILURE. THE EDITORIAL REITERATES THIS POINT BY CONCLUDING THAT WHILE SYRIA IS ANXIOUS TO CONTINUE THE INTERNATIONAL ENDEAVORS FOR PEACE AND EXPLORE ANY POSSIBILITY WHICH MIGHT SERVE THESE ENDEAVORS, IT WILL NOT GIVE UP ITS MINIMUM TERMS AND IT WILL NOT GIVE

UP ITS RIGHT TO EXERCISE ITS SOVEREIGNTY IN DETERMINING ITS
OWN FOREIGN RELATIONS AND ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

4. COMMENT: OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS PRESS TREATMENT OF THE
SECRETARY'S VISIT HAS BEEN RESTRAINED AND LARGELY CONFINED
TO FACTUAL DEVELOPMENTS. ONLY ONCE DID THE MIDDLE EAST
SITUATION OVERSHADOW LEBANON AND INTERNAL SYRIAN ELECTIONS AND
THAT WAS THE DAY THE DEBORCHGRAVE INTERVIEW WAS PUBLISHED.
NONETHELESS, THROUGH EDITORIAL COMMENT THE PRESS HAS
EDUCATED THE SYRIAN PEOPLE (AND THE DIPLOMATIC
COMMUNITY) AS TO SYRIA'S POSITION (AS SUMMARIZED IN
THE TISHRIN EDITORIAL ABOVE) AND HAS WARNED AGAINST EXPECTING
TOO MUCH FROM THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. THE POINT HAS BEEN
MADE THAT SYRIA DOES NOT NEED GENEVA RIGHT NOW AND WILL
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NOT CONCEED ITS FUNDAMENTAL POSITIONS TO GET THERE.

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Message Attributes

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